

THE RURAL REPOSITORY

A Semi-monthly Journal, Embellished with Engravings.

ONE DOLLAR PER ANNUM.

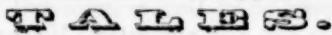
W. B. STODDARD, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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From the Philadelphia Saturday Post.

MARRIED IN A JEST; OR THE TABLES TURNED ON A PRACTICAL JOKER,

BY J. A. SPERRY.

"**D**ELILAH MOORE!

Delilah Moore! you'll be caught in your own trap some day. Oh, you'll change your tune, I'll warrant. You'll play a joke some of these times that will be a sorry joke for you, and old, as I am, I'll live to see it too."

But little did Delilah heed the warning shake of the finger, or the awful prophetic words of Aunt Marcia, as she danced around the room in ecstasy of fun, holding her graceful sides, and filling the house with the merry music of her laughter.

And what think you, was the occasion of her extravagant mirth? Why she had caught, her aunt Marcia composedly dozing in her rocking chair; and we doubt whether a drowning man ever caught more eagerly at a straw than did the mercurial girl at one which lay suggestive of sly mischief, upon the floor. Moving on tip-toe to the back of the old lady's chair she extended the straw, and tickled her aged cheek the least bit in the world. Aunt Marcia, gave her head a shake, as if to dislodge a saucy fly, and Delilah compressed her pretty lips, to restrain her merriment. The straw was again applied, and the old lady raised her hand quickly, but without opening her eyes, to brush away the annoyance. A third time was the provoking titillation repeated, when Aunt Marcia, though not a passionate woman, began to lose patience at the pertinacity of the supposed insect in disturbing her repose, and in mere self defence, resolved on its destruction. Accordingly she raised her hand cautiously to within six or eight inches of her face, and then brought it down with such force as to leave the mark of her fingers there and caused her cheek to tingle with the pain. Delilah could contain herself no longer, but fairly screamed with delight; while her aunt thus made aware of the source of the annoyance, with ominous gravity delivered the speech above quoted.

Lively as a cricket and quite as noisy, was Delilah Moore. She was very pretty, too, indeed bewitching. Auburn hair that flowed in ringlets of gossamer lightness, about the fairest and softest cheeks, light blue eyes, a light step and noisy lips that smiled incessantly, even in sleep; ah, what a lump of mischievous sweetness she was. But she was most incorrigibly addicted to practical joking. I dare say there was not an individual in the village, who had not at some time or other, been a victim of this propensity of hers: and yet nobody could be seriously angry with her. Very nervous people were afraid of her, too; and by them she

was treated after the fashion in which children treat a playful pet kitten—fondled and caressed, but always with due regard to the claws.

Many a village youth addressed her, but she proved a will-o'-the-wisp to her wooers. She was never serious long enough to hear a proposal, so that most of them soon wearied in the butterfly chase she led them. But even a butterfly is caught sometimes; and it is not to be supposed that Delilah could rove forever free. Her mother often said, that just in proportion as she teased, annoyed and ridiculed particular persons, she loved them; and if this was a true criterion, young Walter Lake must have possessed a very large share of her affections; for if there was any one she delighted to plague and play tricks on more than another, it was himself.

He was the son of one of the most wealthy and respectable farmers in the country, and was steadily pursuing the profession of law in the village. He was one of her earliest admirers, and had persevered in his addresses, when his more faint-hearted rivals gave up the seemingly vain pursuit; and yet even with a clear field, his endeavors to "bring her to the mark," seemed hopeless; and he too was beginning to despair, when a little accident, with a little ruse, betrayed the little castle of her heart, which he had been so long besieging, into his hands.

He was walking in the garden with Delilah one evening, straying desperately to bring about a little bit of serious conversation, which she with equal perseverance, evaded by bursts of merriment and strokes of ridicule, when one of her frisky movements brought her foot in collision with a large beam, standing upright, receiving a very precarious support from the bough of a tree which overhung the walk. It toppled over, and Walter in the effort to shield her, caught the whole weight of the blow on his right arm. It occasioned but a slight bruise but perceiving the alarm which Delilah's features instantly exhibited, he turned the affair to good account by affecting to be very seriously hurt.

Of all people, those of a sanguine temperament have the quickest sympathies, and are the least able to control their emotions, whether of pleasure or pain. Delilah for once became as grave and serious as a judge, while her blue eyes swam in tears of unshelved distress.—Walter did not neglect the favorable moment to draw her almost unconsciously into an exposition of her real sentiments towards himself, and such a sweet and unreserved confession of love rewarded the stratagem, as made him inwardly bless the carelessness which had elevated the old stick to its neckbreaking altitude.

Delilah was fairly beaten at her own weapons. Almost ere she had time to think she had exchanged vows, and plighted her faith irrevocably.

In the moments of delicious embarrassment which succeeded the accident that brought the tender scene about, was quietly forgotten; and when she did recall the accident to mind, she was surprised to find that her lover's injured arm had, for the last five minutes, encircled her little waist with an affectionate vigor which was perfectly incompatible with a fractured limb.

"Oh, you yile fellow!" she exclaimed, breaking suddenly away from him, with a return to her accustomed levity, "it wasn't fair—it's too bad to be cheated so; but won't I pay you for this, the next time I catch you? trust me for that," and half piqued at the ruse, yet highly delighted with the result, she tripped away to the house, leaving him to reflect upon the happy adventure.

It might be supposed that now Delilah was engaged, the prospect of some day assuming the responsibilities of a wife, would make her more sedate and dignified. But not so; she was wilder and more mischievous than ever.—Just in proportion as her happiness was increased, her propensity for practical joking was increased also. The very next evening she succeeded in retaliating upon her lover the cheat he had practiced. Some friends were passing the evening with her, and a merry party she made it, with her fun and frolic. When it was nearly time for her company to withdraw, a little dispute arose between her and Walter as to the precise hour.

"It is near eleven o'clock," said he.

"No, scarcely ten," she returned.

"What will you bet," asked he playfully,

"A Quaker sip?" was the ready reply,

"Done!"

The bargain was scarcely closed when the silver tones of the old clock in the hall tolled ten,

"There I've won," exclaimed Delilah.

"Fairly won," answered Walter, but without manifesting any disposition to liquidate the debt,

"Well," cried she in a tone of sly inquiry, "aint you going to pay up?"

Walter was staggered. However happy he might have been to pay the Quaker sip (a coin with which the reader is doubtless familiar) at a more fitting and private opportunity, he was mortified at her seeming want of modesty to demand it in presence of so many witnesses, notwithstanding the light had been sent out of the room a moment previous.

"How can I find you in the dark?" he stammered.

"A pretty excuse, indeed! Here I am behind the table, ready to meet you half way over it; and if it is dark, so much the better—I need be at no pains to hide my blushes."

While the company were electrified at this unlooked for forwardness, Walter's gallantry, unable to withstand a second appeal, urged him reluc-

tantly to the table, when a loud and unequivocal buss testified that a *fip* was duly paid.

"Bring a light, bring a light Ellen Smith!" cried Delilah, almost choking with laughter.—The young lady addressed, anticipating sport of some kind, was not slow to comply, and on her appearance with a light, there stood the fun loving girl, her fair fingers clinching tightly the great ears of her woolly-headed negro maid, whose ebony features were thus held across the table in the precise spot Walter approached to pay the lost *fip*. The rows of grinning ivory betrayed the delight with which Molly participated in the jest. Of course the confused lover was greeted with convulsions of laughter, which he with a lame grace, was forced to join in, while at the same time he made an instinctive manifestation of disgust by applying his handkerchief to his mouth. The cream of the joke, however, Delilah alone enjoyed. While she had determined to turn the laugh upon Walter, she had no notion of being defrauded of her dues—but had in reality received the kiss herself.

Months passed on, and Delilah continued the same provoking, pretty, bewitching, mischievous little mad cap as ever, with the exception that her jokes were not altogether as harmless as formerly, but became more seriously annoying in their character. To be sure she never occasioned pain to others, that she did not bitterly lament it, and sorrow over inconsiderateness with patience that was truly sincere while it lasted. But the rebound of her feelings was always in proportion to the grief which at that moment oppressed them and she was no sooner done mourning for the consequence of one excess, than she was guilty of a greater. Her mother scolded, her father threatened, and her lover entreated, but all ineffectually. The latter indeed, sometimes thought seriously of giving her up entirely, for his judgement whispered to him that it would be impossible to live in harmony with such a mixture of mischief and caprice; but somehow his heart in the other scale always kicked the beam against the reason, and he could not muster resolution to forsake her. Apart from her unfortunate peculiarity, she possessed every charm that was desirable in a woman; and Walter preached himself into forbearance, and lived along in the hope that she would some day see the impropriety of her conduct, and settle down finally to love honor and obey, in sober earnestness, as a sensible woman should.

In the mean time the various members of Delilah's family, who were kept in a continual ferment by her eccentricities, held an indignation meeting at which, after due deliberation it was resolved she must be cured, and her worthy uncle the Dr. was entrusted with the task.

"So uncle, you have undertaken to cure my—what do you call the affection? oh, I have it? *morbid propensity for joking!*" exclaimed Delilah, as she tripped into his office, the day after holding the family council.

"Kill or cure, you jade, that's my maxim," returned the Doctor, tartly, without taking his eyes off the paper upon which he was inditing a prescription.

"La! what a dear barbarous old uncle you are! But I hope you will adopt the homœopathic treatment in my case."

"Homœopathic be hanged!" the Doctor was intolerant of all innovations.

"I am quite taken with homœopathy of late," continued Delilah; "I believe in that doctrine and I won't be treated by any other system."

"Suppose we compromise it sauce box, said the Doctor, peering over his spectacles with a twinkle of his small round eyes, which meant more than he chose to utter; "suppose we compromise it, and say a homœopathic remedy in alopatic proportions."

"Good, good!" exclaimed his merry niece; "I'll be your patient forever!"

The Doctor shook his head menacingly and left his seat to rumage his book shelves for a volume which he just then had occasion for.—Delilah as soon as his back was turned, slipped into his chair unfolded the prescription which he had just written, and found it to read thus:

Bx—Argent. nitr. gr. x.

Aqua dist, zig—m.

With a scalpel which lay upon the table, the incorrigible girl dexterously erased some of the letters and with a pen interloping others—a task which the Doctor's sprawling and disconnected chiography rendered quite easy—soon altered the reading to the following form:

Br—A gent in kid gloves,

Agreeably disposed,

Marry immediately.

When the Doctor resumed his seat, the altered prescription was carefully refolded and turned to its place—while Delilah, in another chair was busy in the perusal of the last Gazette.—A few minutes afterwards a servant made his appearance, and the prescription was placed in his hands, with directions to deliver it to Miss Afterprime. Miss Olivia, by the way, was a young maiden, with a year or two on the sunny side of fifty, and of expressively tender sensibilities.

The door had scarce closed after the servant, ere Delilah's laughter burst out. The Doctor started as if he had received an electric shock. Knowing that those merry sounds portended mischief, his first impulse was to pass his hand to his head to make sure that his wig was there, his next, to examine the skirts of his coat to see that no quizzing label was pinned to them. Finding his person exempt from the trick, whatever it might be, he turned to his niece with as much austerity as he could assume—for it was almost impossible to resist the contagion of her merriment—and said approaching her with a demonstration of resoluteness.

"Get you gone, graceless! You've been at some of your mischief again!"

Delilah, in unrestrained glee, scampered into the house adjoining, and was soon engaged poking new fun at her aunt. The Doctor commenced a diligent search for the cause of her amusement. While he was thus engaged his servant returned with the altered proscription which solved the mystery. Miss Olivia Afterprime had nigh gone into convulsions at the sight of it, and in towering indignation, had sent immediately for another physician. Whether the Doctor was greatly grieved at the loss of his patient does not appear—but certain it is that he inwardly vowed vengeance upon Delilah. Putting his hat over his eyes, and burying his hands deep in his pockets, he hurried forth to agitate a plot retributive.

When the Doctor returned to dinner, and found his niece at the table, there was a complacency in the air, and a sort of anticipated triumph in the twinkle of his eye which seemed to say—"ah, in-

fidel, I have thee!" No other allusion direct or indirect, was made to the jest of the morning—if we except a sly smile that lurked in the corners of Delilah's mouth as she suspended her knife and fork to glance roguishly into her uncle's face. Dinner concluded, she ran up to get her bonnet to go home. She lingered a few moments at the toilet to arrange her curls. This done she turned to leave the chamber, but "no go"—for the door had been closed, and the key turned on the outside.

"So ho!" said she to herself, "I am to be kept here prisoner, till tea time, as punishment for my trick. Ha, ha! what a retaliation! His vengeance hath this extent—no more! Bless his good natured pate!"

Quite contented with her *durance*, she took up a book and seated herself by the open window. Her eyes soon wandered from its pages however, and her attention was caught by "metal more attractive" without. In the piazza, in the rear of the hotel—which was just opposite, and divided from the Doctor's residence only by a small yard attached to either building—stood a stranger, who was leaning forward in an attitude of intense admiration gazing at Delilah through his eye glass. He was dressed in the top mode—with long black hair, most fastidiously combed and curled; whiskers of a length and luxuriosness that would have done no discredit to a Moslem; a mustache of elegant proportions; and what combined to make his appearance eminently ridiculous, his eye glass was applied over a pair of green spectacles. Altogether, his air and manner was so decidedly Frenchified, that there was no mistaking his nationality.

Delilah ever on the alert for making sport, ran to the closet, brought forth a telescope, and resting it on the window sill, applied it to her eye, and brought it to bear upon the queer stranger. Monsieur no sooner perceived himself the subject of her inspection, than he began making a most extravagant display of admiration by gesticulating violently laying his hand upon his heart, clasping them before his face, bending one knee in an attitude of deploring admiration, and wafting on the tips of his fingers numerous and frequent kisses.

"The impudent fool," exclaimed our little quiz, astonished as well as amused at the man's conduct—"but I'll punish his impertinence and give my uncle the slip at the same time."

Tearing the fly leaf from the book she had at first been engaged with, she scribbled upon it the following note:

"Oh, gentle Monsieur; I am locked up here by a cruel uncle. Fly to rescue me from this terrible imprisonment. There is a ladder in the yard which you can easily elevate to the window. Set me free and you will be entitled to the eternal gratitude of the unhappy prisoner."

Folding this paper with a thimble inside, she threw it over into the hotel yard, the Frenchman darted forward, caught it, pressed it eagerly to his lips, and opened it.

By this time several of the inmates of the hotel, male and female, and all intimate with Delilah, the host himself being a relative of her father, had crowded into the piazza, and were interested in watching the proceedings. The Frenchman, as soon as he had perused the *billet doux*, cleared the fence at a bound; speedily elevated the ladder he found there, to the window, and stood holding it firm for the gay beauty's descent. She

had no intention of exposing the prettiest foot and ankle in the village to Monsieur's ardent gaze ; but after thanking him a number of times for his gallantry, bade him return to the hotel where she should join him to express her gratitude more fully.

"I have ver' much honor to obey Mademoiselle!" Bowing humbly, he marched off, turning at every step to kiss his fingers to her, and not neglecting in his passage to wrench a board from the fence, thus removing every obstacle to Mademoiselle's decamp. Delilah now descended and followed him.

"You see Monsieur, it has not taken me long to join you," said she when she had reached the piazza.

"Oui Madamoiselle, I have ver' large happiness if it will be no more to part."

"You are so modest," answered Delilah."

The Frenchman bowed in acknowledgement and Delilah's friends here united their voices in commendation of his gallantry, declaring that she could do no less, in pure gratitude, than to reward the deliverer with her hand.

Perceiving from their merry glances the company was ripe for fun, and considering the impudent stranger as a fair butt, the giddy girl exclaimed, addressing the landlord—

"Bring a broom, cousin Jack, and let me prove my gratitude by jumping the broom-stick with him."

"Jump the broom-stick with Count de Laphinstank?" answered the good humored landlord, with a wink, "no, no, my little coz, we'll manage it better. Here's a young friend of mine" pointing to a traveller, a recent guest who stood by, "can play parson for once, and I'll furnish the feast gratis."

"But Monsieur has not signified his consent yet," said Delilah with a glance at the Count.

"Oh, I have so much pleasure I cannot express."

"Very good," said Juck "just take your places and let the ceremony proceed."

The Count begged a few moments delay for the purpose of providing himself with a white vest, which he declared indispensable. Leave being granted he entered the house to make the proposed improvement in his toilet, and the young man who had been called on to officiate, followed him to procure, as he said a dictionary or prayer book, to read the service from. They returned together in about ten minutes; the mock ceremony was performed, and they were pronounced man and wife.

"Now, Madame," said the Count, with a slight assumption of lordly authority, my coach is wait in de street—we must make the journey to my palace in the country.

"Not so fast, Monsieur, I believe in your country married people very frequently do not live together, and as I am now a French woman, I shall adopt French customs."

Pardonnez-moi—ven de Frenchman come in de republique, he do as the republicans."

"We will discuss the question at another time," said Delilah, "for the present, dear Monsieur, adieu."

The Count remonstrated vehemently in bad English, and with ludicrously passionate gesticulations. Delilah laughed merrily, adjusted her bonnet and went home; flattering herself that she had sufficiently punished his impudence by making him the ridiculous hero of a joke.

It was about six o'clock the same evening, that a servant tapped at the door of Delilah's chamber, and delivered a message from her father, requesting her presence in the library.

Shaking off her drowsiness, for she had just been indulging in a short nap, she hurried down to the library, where she found her father and mother Dr. Moore and aunt Marcia, assembled in solemn conclave. There was something in the solemn silence of the group, and the awful gravity upon their features, that filled her with unpleasant forebodings as she timidly enquired her father's will.

"Your folly, Delilah, has at length involved you in a serious difficulty," said the old man, in a tone of mingled sorrow and reproof.

"You would not heed my warnings," added aunt Marcia, "and now you will feel the consequences."

"I have been expecting it," chimed in the mother; "I have all along been in continual dread that she would bring some punishment upon herself."

"Countess Delilah de Laphinstank?" broke from the Doctor with a sarcastic bitterness, "a pretty laughing-stock, truly, you have made of yourself for the rest of your days. You have saved me the trouble of giving you a homoeopathic dose in allopathic proportions—you have prepared yourself one that cannot fail to cure."

"What in the world can be the meaning of all this?" inquired Delilah, uncertain whether they were speaking in sober earnestness or had formed a little plot to terrify her.

"That foolish marriage ceremony," resumed the father.

"Was a very innocent joke," interrupted the daughter.

"I hope it may prove so," said the father, shaking his head gravely; "but at present it wears a very serious appearance."

"Ah, father," exclaimed Delilah, throwing her arms around his neck, with a gay smile, "you are only trying to frighten me."

Her father bit his lip and knit his brow in the effort to keep up the sternness which the caresses of his pet were fast dissipating, and disengaging her arms, referred her to her uncle.

"You have carried the joke too far this time, niece," said the Doctor; "the Frenchman turned the table on you. Under the pretence of changing his vest, it seems he slipped down to the clerk's office and procured a license—the young man who officiated was a regular ordained minister; the ceremony, although you went through with mock gravity, was in the form, and, as you are of age, the marriage is perfectly valid. Your husband has already instituted legal proceedings to compel your father to give you up, and the case is to have a private hearing before Squire Fairplay to-morrow."

"Oh, uncle, you are jesting, surely," said Delilah, the tears springing to her eyes.

"You judge others by yourself, niece; but I have spoken the truth seriously."

It would be impossible to describe the violence of the girl's grief, when convinced of the reality of the Doctor's statement. Her parents appeared to participate in her distress, but made no effort to console her, nor held out any hope of escaping from the doom she had so inconsolably brought upon herself. Their seeming lack of sympathy shocked

her even more than the difficulty itself. She refused to believe that the law could force her to live with a man whom she was sure she could never regard with other feelings than dislike and contempt. She relied, too, upon the strength of Walter Lake's affection, and felt confident that his arm, if none other, would be found ready and all-powerful to rescue her from so melancholy a fate.—Anxiously and with streaming eyes, she watched for his coming, but when the hours waned and he came not as usual, fears and doubts began to gather in a sickening throng about her heart. She retired to her chamber at length, to weep away one part of the night, and to pass the other in a slumber disturbed by dreadful visions.

The hour of the hearing of the case before the magistrate arrived next morning, and Delilah in tears, accompanied by her father and uncle, entered the coach and drove to Squire Fairplay's.—The Count's counsel, with a few witnesses, were waiting their arrival. There was one thing, however, that struck Delilah as strange—that while the Frenchman's cause was entrusted in the hands of a lawyer, she was compelled to appear in person and her friends neglected to procure legal aid.—She expressed her mind to her uncle, and insisted that Walter Lake should be immediately sent for.

"It will be useless, my dear," returned the doctor; "he has become so exasperated by your relentless trifling, the affair of yesterday determined his resentment."

An ashen parlor overspread the agitated girl's face, but was quickly followed by a flush of indignation, and murmuring "he's cold-hearted and false!" she turned to the magistrate with assumed calmness and signified that she was ready for the proceedings. The case was quickly dispatched. The license was exhibited the testimony examined, and the marriage incontestably proved to be valid. The magistrate without hesitation, declared that the person of the wife must be delivered to the lawful husband. He then addressed a few words of mild admonition to the defendant, and concluded by recommending resignation to her lot, and expressing a hope that the severe trial might result ultimately in her own happiness and good.

The provoking coolness and indifference to her feelings which she thought was displayed in the whole proceedings, by even the nearest and dearest relatives, aroused to the full Delilah's pride, which enabled her to conceal for the time her harrowing emotion.

The Count's counsel now stated that a feeling of delicacy and regard for the lady's feelings, had restrained his client from appearing in court in person, but that a coach was waiting to convey her under his charge, to her future home. He also expressed a desire that one of the lady's relatives should accompany her. The doctor volunteered; Delilah took a constrained leave of her father; walked to the carriage with a firm step and entered it with the dignified step of a martyr. But as the vehicle rolled off, and the feeling came over her that she was leaving her early home, kindred, and friends, to share the fortunes of a stranger whom she could not help but regarding as a madman and a brute, her affected composure forsook her, and dropping her head on her uncle's shoulder, her agony broke forth in tears and sobs. The doctor strove to soothe her, by bringing to view the bright side of the picture. He dwelt upon the warmth

heartedness and urbanity of the French character the wealth and respectability of the Count, and expressed little doubt that she would soon become reconciled to her lot and learn to love her eccentric lord. All his words were ineffectual—she continued inconsolable.

The coach finally reached the place of destination, a beautiful country seat, some six or eight miles from the village, and Delilah, in a state of listless, despair, suffered herself to be conducted to an elegantly furnished room where her uncle placed her on a sofa with her face buried in her hands, and left her after an exhortation to compose herself for an interview with her husband.

As she sat reflecting upon her situation she resolved to make an appeal to the generosity of the Count, to beg and entreat him to release her from her thoughtless vows; if that failed, to effect resignation until the first chance of escape, and then go forth a wanderer, she knew not whither.

In a few minutes the Frenchman entered. She did not look up, and he seating himself by her side said :

"*Bon jour, madame; I am very much delight dat you come.*"

At the sound of his execrable voice, Delilah could hardly repress the feeling of passionate resistance to which she was tempted, and the word "monster!" involuntarily broke from her lips.

"Ah, madame, you pronounce dat word wrong; but I shall learn you to speak de French *plus parfaitement*. *Monsieur* is de proper."

A pause ensued. Delilah averted her head; and the Count very coolly divested himself of his wig, whiskers, moustache, and green spectacles. This done he laid his hand upon her arm, and dropping his assumed dialect said :

"Perhaps, Delilah, you may find me neither a monstre nôr a monsieur."

At the first tones of the altered voice, Delilah started from her seat, and ere he had finished the sentence, overpowered with joyous emotion "she had thrown herself, with a scream of delight, into the arms of her own Walter.

Half an hour afterwards, when the doctor entered, he found his niece cheerfully laughing over all she had suffered.

"How does the Countess Delilah de Lapinstank like the homeopathic dose in slopslike proportions now?" asked he in a tone of affectionate railing.

"It was a cruel jest; but perhaps I deserved it," replied the laughing bride; at any rate, I am so happy in being undeviated, that I cannot feel angry with the perpetrators."

Delilah became to Waller a cheerful, devoted and amiable wife; but from that day forth she eschewed practical joking. She has doubtless discovered by this time that there are other and sufficient modes of amusing ourselves and enjoying life, without sporting with the feelings or doing violence to the prejudices of others.

THE DEMON BOWLER.

BY ALFRED CROWQUILL.

My first bat—that is, the first worthy of being called a bat—I took to school with me as a present from my mother to mitigate my grief at leaving home. Never shall I forget the delight with which I gazed upon the beautiful finish and magnificent

make of my loved bat; and how I fancied to myself the envy of my school-fellows when I produced it on the play-ground, where I felt assured that, with such an ally, victory was certain.

Dangerous bat! Little did my fond mother think what a fatal gift she had presented me with; for the instant I became, in my own right, the proprietor of the best bat in the school, I threw my whole soul into the game. Everything in the world took, to my imagination, the form of a game at cricket. Every man had an innings. He who had the most successful hits was of course the winner; but, however dexterous and fortunate, Death at last bowled him out. Some men went in and achieved nothing but hard labor, and were finished off without a single stroke in their favor.

Notwithstanding this enthusiasm, I must confess that I was not a crack player. All my labor never placed me first. I saw worse men, with worse bats, achieve greatness: I was but a second-rate. How I labored, but in vain! My score was always the least, and yet I certainly had the best bat.

I joined a celebrated club when I became a young man. I was received rather, as they were pleased to say, as a good fellow, than a good player. I bowed to the compliment that marked me as not what I wish to be; and I felt a sad disappointment chill my very heart.

Matches, maty and victorious, were played by our club, but I did not aid much by my score; but more than once nearly lost to others their triumph, through some slip or awkwardness of my own.—But they still called me a good fellow, worked the harder to make up for my incapacity. Our side won; but I was a miserable, dejected man, when I read my name tacked to two three runs. Oh! what would I have given to have received the applause bestowed on the hero of forty runs. Why was it? My turn-out was unexceptionable: men copied my running shoes: jacket and trowsers were an admiration; my bat perfection: I was the very picture of a cricketer, but, alas! Very little more than a picture.

I sat in my chambers pondering on my ill-luck after a day of triumph to, my club, but not to me. I must confess that I was bowled out without the satisfaction of a single stroke. I could not help it. A mist seemed to obscure my sight as a celebrated bowler sent in his first ball. I never saw the ball. I heard the whistling sound of its course, and saw the stumps fly into the air from the palpable and violent hit. A roar of laughter sounded from the populace: I felt myself a degraded muff, unfit ever to put on even the outside of a cricketer. My friends crowded round me, but I would not be consoled. I had only one burning desire, which was, to have the head of the aforesaid wonderful bowler just within arms length of my best bat. I felt convinced I should not have missed that. I returned home completely chapfallen; and felt too agitated to sleep; so threw open the window, and sat down to brood over my ill-luck, and bite my finger nails to the quick.

What burning thoughts rushed through my brain. I pondered, until I was nearly mad, upon other people's triumphs and my own disgrace. I confess I swore little mental oaths, for I had been sacrificing, in my chagrin, rather too liberally to the rosy god.

I looked upon the broad quadrangle of my inn,

where the moon shed its light calmly and tranquilly upon the worn pavement. No light, however, glimmered in the numerous chamber windows; it was late, and everybody had retired for hours. A calm and oppressive silence reigned around, but there was a storm raging in my bosom. I was not a cricketer. I had been laughed at—beaten. I almost took a dreadful oath that I would burn my bats, stumps and all my useless paraphernalia. What right had I to put on the insignia of a member of the noble science, disgracing it and myself? Miserable batter! the glory had departed from my house.

I threw myself back in my chair with a savage groan, which resounded through the solitary chamber. On the instant I heard a knocking at the door as if some one was applying his knuckles on the panel. I pricked up my ears; for the hour was certainly most unseasonable; my heart fluttered most tumultuously and uncontrollably for I hardly felt alarmed, yet experienced a most peculiar feeling. I could scarcely collect presence of mind enough to bid the knocker come in; but I did so after a little hesitation.

My lamp which was burning low, flickered with quite power enough for me to see the door in the distance open very slowly, and give entrance to the figure of a man.

He bowed most politely, and placing his hat and gloves methodically on the table, he approached me.

I felt a little startled at his appearance, for his face was anything but prepossessing; for, upon close inspection, I perceived that his continual smile played only about his mouth, as if to show his white and glistening teeth: the upper part of his face, particularly his brows, being contracted by an expression of pain and disquiet.

He approached with a noiseless tread, motioning me, at the same time, to resume my seat, which I had risen from on his entrance. I accordingly did so, and he coolly took a chair and seated himself opposite to me, then placing his hand familiarly on my knee, said with a more fascinating smile:

"My dear sir, I am a stranger to you; and my visit is, I dare say, at an unseasonable hour, according to fashionable idea, but I am a very old-fashioned fellow, and think no hour can be bad in which I can do good. I am aware of your melancholy failure to-day—in fact, I may say, I hope without offence, for I mean none—ridiculous failure."

I winced at his impertinence, and felt very much inclined to kick him, had I not been influenced, as it were, by a spell cast over me by his appearance and strange address.

"I feel," continued he, "that your situation is both ridiculous and painful; for not being able to do what some of the greatest fools on earth excel in is ridiculous, and to a sensitive mind like yours decidedly painful.

"I, therefore, have come, although I confess unseasonably, to offer you my aid in achieving the principal object of your life—to make you a conquering-cricketer. In these modern days, when men laugh at anything in my line, which I will explain to you in a minute or so, it is difficult to persuade them to trust in one; but I feel a sympathy towards you, for you are decidedly one of the 'fallen, fallen, fallen'; beaten, disgraced, and laughed at by grooms, pot-boys, chums, and faint

ladies, which last is most grievous and annihilating to a man of your complexion and age. If this is not the very devil, what is? Now, I have come in a most friendly way to offer you a salve for all your wounds: to cover your head with an undying wreath, and make you the envied of all the clubs in the universe, both single and married, and the desired of all 'elevens,' however celebrated.

"My terms are as low as possible for such a large grant; and I am prepared to qualify you in the twinkling of an eye, and make you second to none. I feel you will be slow in belief of my power to do so, but the bond shall be drawn up so that if you do not become what I promise you shall be, the penalty of the bond becomes null and void.

"Thus, then, if you will sign a bond that will not touch or endanger any of your worldly goods, but merely consign yourself to me after death, I am ready to perform my part of the bargain without delay. To-morrow, I know, you are engaged with your eleven to play an eleven that has always threshed yours most heartily, and indeed, feels a contempt for you as a club. Now, what would you not give to be the main instrument of their downfall to-morrow, and of achieving a grand triumph before the multitude which is expected on the ground? I have the power to make you do so, if you come to my terms: if you do not do as I promise you, your part of the agreement becomes mere waste paper—think."

As he concluded, he threw himself back in the chair, and smiled in my face.

There certainly was a curious, creeping feeling over my flesh when his hand touched my knee, and I felt alarmed when I found that his face never, with the exception of the smile, remained for one instant alike. What could he be? The devil? ridiculous! What could he be then?—a hoaxter, no doubt. My anger instantly rose, and I felt inclined to knock him down, but was much astonished and alarmed to find I had not the power to do so. Yet I thought if such a thing were possible that he had the power to endow me with a conquering arm, how gladly would I consent to his terms; to triumph over those whose scorn had placed a burning brand in my bosom. As these thoughts rushed hurriedly through my brain, he fixed his eyes upon me with a most unmistakable sarcastic look.

"I perceive," said he, "that it is not my terms, but my ability you doubt; but I can assure you that, although I cannot give you any references as to character from individuals who have dealt with me, as my transactions always speak for themselves; it being always 'no cure, no pay' with me; for my bond is nothing unless I fulfil the contract to the letter—you may place full confidence in me. On my own part I will take care of myself.

"If you will allow me to show you an article I have here, manufactured by myself, I think we may do business together." As he spoke, he unfolded a parcel which he drew from an unconscionably long tail pocket. He untied the different wrappers in the most tradesman-like manner, and at last discovered to my astonished eyes, a remarkable-looking cricket bat.

"This article," continued he, "I can offer you, with the positive assurance of its being in every way all right; warranted never to miss, and make nothing under a three-run hit; so that you may remain in as long as you may wish, or as your

legs will allow you. This bat has belonged to all the celebrated cricketers of the day, who have all dealt with me, more or less. The hotter the day, the better will this bat play; as that kind of atmosphere suits the wood of which it is composed. This is the secret of the apparent madness, to the uninitiated, of men choosing to play a match when the heat has been almost intolerable; in fact, warm enough to drive a nigger to the shade of a palm-tree. Look at the result. Not a knot disfigures its smooth surface—the handle laced to a miracle; and the slight and graceful turn of the back vies with the beautiful line of the Venus de Medici; but its beauty is its least merit.

"Here's the bat. Here's the little agreement," continued he, pushing the bat into my unnerved hands, and placing a small slip of paper before me. "Sign it, the bat is yours until I want it again.—No qualmishness, I beg, for I really have too much to do to wait for your wavering resolution."

An odd sort of vertigo seemed to be reeling my head round as I almost unconsciously took the pen in my hand. I signed the paper. I saw the signature was red, and supposed I had dipped by mistake in the red-ink bottle. As I finished my last down stroke the paper slipped from under the nib of my pen, and I was alone. I heard no door close—no creaking footstep; but my friend had gone. But there was the bat firmly grasped in my hand, and the moonlight shining on my writing table.

The next morning dawned. How sweet and refreshing was the morning air to my fevered head! I prepared for my jaunt to my club as I had promised ever and anon looking to see that the strange-looking bat had vanished. But no—there it stood, in all its perfect beauty, and I had not been deceived. How extraordinary! Would it do all that had been promised? Should I have the glory of seeing my rivals' chagrin? It did not seem possible: it was some dream. Devils no longer came visibly upon earth to tempt mortals. Besides, I had never heard of a cricketing devil.

But devil or no devil, there was a bat of unexampled beauty; so, *nil desperandum*, I must go—I must play—my fate was sealed. I packed up my traps and prepared to depart, but found the door locked inside as usual. A shudder came over me at the discovery. I felt that my friend of the bat must have been more than mortal to have entered through the key hole; and there was the chair placed exactly as he had taken it from its usual standing and sat down in it."—"What's done cannot be undone," I muttered to myself, with no pleasant feeling, as I shouldered my bat and emerged from my chamber.

I soon reached the place of rendezvous, and was greeted by the merry voices of my companions, who were already seated on the coach which was to convey us to our place of destination.—They bantered me upon my dilatoriness, and the fear they were in that such a valuable member should be missing at the muster to meet our formidable opponents; at the same time hoping that I had saved up my runs for to-day, as I had not used up any the day before.

I bore all this like a martyr, and trembled in fear that my promised triumph might vanish at the very moment that I hoped to astonish the field.

We bowled merrily down the road through the

pleasant little villages, all looking peaceful and happy as the invigorating morning sun shone brilliantly upon their flower-decked casement.—The children gambolled after us as we passed, and the echo of their ringing laughter followed us long after the turning of the road shut them from our sight. How enviable did they appear to me—happy and innocent, while I, the fool of pride and paltry ambition, had become the victim of the —. But I dared not think: I clutched my bat tighter as I recalled to my memory the insults of yesterday; notwithstanding which a heavy and oppressive feeling seemed to throw a shadow over my mirth.

My companions soon perceived my dullness, and laughed at my lowness of spirits, bade me hope for better things, and said they would feel satisfied if I even got three runs.

We reached the ground, a lovely village green, surrounded by the little white-washed cottages that peeped at us from amidst most patriarchal-looking trees; the bells were ringing from the moss-grown tower of the venerable church in honor of our arrival. Everybody seemed to have put on their holiday faces to greet us.

Our opponents soon followed, coming in groups over the fields and through the shady lanes. We were all soon shaking hands with the jollity of feeling that inspires such a meeting upon such a spot, determined upon a day of enjoyment. The village belles formed into picturesque little groups around the field of action, and many a bright look was sent to inspire our opponents, who were playing upon their own ground. Such an audience, you may be sure, made me feel tenfold the desire to distinguish myself; and, if all turned out according to the promise of my last night's visitor, I felt that my desperation would not allow of any regrets.

After the usual preliminaries had been settled, and all had taken their places, our side going in first, and our best men at the wickets, the bowler, a powerful man, with the frame of a Hercules, approached to his task. My heart shrank within me as I heard the whistle of the ball, as he delivered it with the force of one fired from a culverin. It was blocked by the wary batter, but with a shock almost enough to shake his shoulders from their sockets.

Again he bowled, when to my astonishment, I saw the stumps fly little chips, and our best man had not got one run. Cheers ran round the circle as our man threw down his bat with a burning blush upon his angry brow. Well did I understand his feelings, for I had so often been placed in the like situation. The hopes of our club fell below zero, especially when they saw unfortunate me take up my bat in my turn.

At that moment a sort of desperation seized me, as I saw the smiles of the other club-men, and the despairing looks of my own dear friends. I stood erect in my faultless dress by the side of the stumps, with my bat elegantly poised in my hand. The magnificent bowler looked with a sinister eye upon my attitude, and I thought a smile of contempt curled his lip, and I made no doubt that my fame had gone before me, and he held me as almost unworthy of his prowess. Wait a bit, thought I to myself, as I stooped to take my position; but as I did so, guess my feelings, and the thrill that rushed to my very heart, when I felt a warm pair of hands grasp the handle of the bat in the spaces

THE RURAL REPOSITORY.

of the handle left by mine. I turned my eyes down, but saw nothing but my own round the handle. Strange! dreadful! but I must go on. The bowler's arm was in motion; I saw the dreaded ball rush on its rapid course through the air; my bat raised itself, and with itself my arms, and dealt such a blow upon the whistling missile, that it flew far away in the distance far beyond the chance of being caught. I flew with almost winged feet along my course;—again—again—again!

Five runs! Huzza! shouted the excited gazers. Huzza! shouted the astonished members of my own club.

The bowler looked puzzled. He seemed suddenly to feel that he had been hoaxed, and appeared to lose confidence accordingly. He, however, nerved himself for his next ball, and most beautifully and scientifically did he deliver it; but my magic bat hit it with such a tremendous blow, that its velocity made it almost indistinct. At last its course was distinguished by the astonished shouts, but it was handled only after six more runs were scored to me.

Our opponents began to look a little blank, whilst my own side looked at me as if they thought that they must have changed my bat by some accident on the road down; for it was impossible that I could be the poor and timid player that was looked upon as naught among players. They looked at each other with unbelieving eyes, and seemed to hug themselves, as they saw the downcast look of the vaunting club at my unexpected success and prowess.

But I had only just begun. The great bowler tried all his best manœuvres, but in vain. My bat sent the ball flying hither and thither; the scouts got redder and redder in their faces; the bowler's arm became powerless.

"Forty runs!" cried the scorer. I saw nothing but the round orbs of my friends, which were gradually distending with astonishment, as they saw me polish off one bowler after another. As for my own part, I felt myself getting red-hot. I glowed with delight and exertion. The cheers of the populace maddened me. I felt no fatigue. Hour after hour flew by; I drank draught after draught, but my thirst seemed unquenchable; still my spirit upheld me, and I stuck to my bat.

The twilight gradually settled down upon the scene as I achieved eighty runs, to the despair of the village club. For a long time both sides had done their work quite mechanically, as if they had been spell bound by the magic of the bat. All eyes were fixed with a stare upon me in perfect wonderment.

At last, a figure, with careful step and well poised ball, took his place at the bowler's stand. I shuddered as I looked upon him; his scrupulously elegant cricketer's costume, and the deep shadow cast from the broad brim of his straw-hat, could not hide from me the bright eyes and sardonic smile of my last night's visitor.

Fatigue and excitement had long hushed the murmurs of the lookers on. My preternatural tenure of my post had stilled them into silence; so that I was surrounded by hundred of distended eyes that had long become painful to my sight, when my occupation allowed me an opportunity of a furtive glance at them.

They watched with quickened glances the approach of the new and mysterious bowler. Not

a breath nor a word broke the silence of the evening. All around looked pale like statues waiting the wand of the enchanter to release them or give them vitality.

A tremor passed through my frame as I saw his hand preparing to launch the ball. The magic bat quivered in my hand—it refused to move—and the ball struck with superhuman force upon the stumps, which, the next moment, lay shattered at my feet. The bat became, as it were, animated, and twined itself round my wrists.

The shout that followed my downfall was tremendous. The bowler walked up to me with perfect unconcern, and passing his arm through mine, led me unresistingly through the crowd, which a rapidly falling darkness turned into phantoms. The moment he touched me, a parched and burning feeling seemed to scorch me, and a liquid fire ran through my veins.

"You've had your game," he hissed into my ears; "and had not I had the foresight to be on the ground, you would never have finished. Your exertion, as it is, has completely finished you; therefore I claim you while your remaining strength allows me to walk you off. You are not the first man I have bowled out. You have beaten all those fools,—I have beaten you. Of course, you pay me the forfeit; come, stir your *stumps*, for I shall not accept *bail*; and you are now going where you will make a *long stop*; for, you see, I've not only bowled but *caught you out*.

I felt that I was in the power of the fiend, and for what? I looked back despairingly to the fast fading crowd of my friends. They seemed to take no heed of me, and I was lost.

A thought of resistance rushed into my brain; I endeavored to struggle with my tormentor. He only smiled at my puny efforts; yet I preserved, and in a moment burst from my bonds. In my struggle I awoke myself, and found that I was seated by the window of the chamber, where I had slept all night of the day of my mortifying defeat. Heated as I had been, the cold had seated a fever in my blood, which had carried out the full vigor of my dream.

The cold grey light of morning saw me crawl, almost crippled, to my bed, from which I did not rise for some weeks, as the penalty of my folly; and when, in after years, I became a rising man in the game of the world, I looked back with horror to the Dream of the Demon Bowler.

BIOGRAPHY.



JAMES THOMSON.

JAMES THOMSON, a celebrated English poet, son of a Scotch minister, and born Ednam in Roxburghshire, 11th September 1700. He was educated at Jedburgh school, and then entered at the

university of Edinburgh. He here distinguished himself by the elegance and spirit of his compositions, and when he had been directed by the divinity professor, Hamilton, to write an exercise on a psalm, descriptive of the greatness and majesty of God, his paraphrase was much admired for its fire and its poetical beauties. He then studied divinity, but soon relinquished it, as he considered the profession too confined for the expansion of his abilities. He determined to seek in London the patronage which might be extended to merit, and the publication of his *Winter*, 1726, soon introduced him to the notice of the great and of the learned. By the friendship of Dr. Rundle, afterwards bishop of Derry, he was recommended to lord chancellor Talbot, and attended his son as a companion in his travels on the continent. The popularity of *Winter* produced *Summer* in 1727, *Spring* 1728, and *Autumn* in 1730; and other pieces were also published to prove the diligence the patriotism, and the creative powers of the poet. The death of his noble pupil was soon after followed by that of the chancellor, and Thomson was thus reduced from a state of comfort and independence, to a narrow and precarious subsistence. The place of secretary of the briefs which he had obtained from the chancellor, fell at his death, yet the generosity of his friends was kindly exerted, he was by the recommendation of lord Lyttleton noticed and patronised with a pension by the Prince of Wales, and by the influence of the same noble friend he obtained in 1746, the office of surveyor general of the Leeward islands. He died 27th August, 1748. Besides his *Seasons*, Thomson wrote an elegant poem to the memory of sir Isaac Newton, 1727—*Britannia*, a political poem, occasioned by the quarrels of the Spaniards with England, with respect to America—*Liberty*, a poem in five books, containing ancient and modern Italy compared, Greece, Rome, Britain, the Prospect—the Castle of Indolence, an allegorical poem, after Spenser's manner—besides some tragedies which were received on the stage with reiterated and deserved applause—*Agamemnon*, acted 1738—*Edward and Eleanora*, a tragedy, not acted in consequence of the dispute between the prince of Wales his patron, and the king—the *Masque of Alfred*, written jointly with Mallet—*Tancred and Sigismunda*, from Gil Blas, acted 1745—and *Coriolanus*, acted after his death for the benefit of his sisters. Thomson in private life was an amiable, pious, and benevolent character, with great goodness of heart and the most virtuous disposition. As a poet he possessed powers and perfections peculiarly his own. His *Seasons* display the most glowing, animated, and interesting descriptions of nature, in language at once elegant, simple and dignified. They bring before us, as is well observed, the whole magnificence of nature, whether pleasing or dreadful. The gaiety of spring, the splendor of summer, the tranquillity of autumn, and the horrors of winter, take each in turn the possession of our minds. In the midst of a florid and luxuriant flow of imagery, some exuberances perhaps may be found by the fastidious critic, but the merits of the poet are built on too solid a foundation to be shaken, and while the delightful changes of the varied year continue to convey pleasure to the eye, so long must the verse of the poet entertain the mind with the most seducing powers, of well managed description and of animated portraiture.

MISCELLANY.

GOOD AND BAD LUCK

I MAY as well here as any where, impart the secret of *good* and *bad luck*. There are men who supposing Providence to have an implacable spite against them, bemoan in the poverty of a wretched old age, the misfortunes of their lives. Luck forever ran against them, and for others. One with a good profession, lost his luck in the river, where he idled away his time in fishing, when he should have been in his office.—Another with a good trade, perpetually burnt up his luck by his hot temper, which provoked his employers to leave him. Another, with a lucrative business, lost his luck by amazing dilligence at every thing but his business. Another, who steadily followed his trade as steadily followed his bottle. Another who was honest and constant to his work erred by perpetual misjudgments; he lacked discretion. Hundreds lose their luck by endorsing—by sanguine speculations—by trusting fraudulent men—and by dishonest gains. A man never has good luck who has a bad wife. I never knew an early-rising, hard-working, prudent man, careful of his earnings, and strictly honest, who complained of bad luck. A good character, good habits, and iron industry, are impregnable to the assaults of all the ill-luck that fools ever dreamed of. But when I see a tatterdemalion creeping out of a grocery late in the afternoon, with his hands stuck in his pockets, the rim of his hat turned up, and the crown knocked in, I know he has had bad luck—for the worst of all luck is to be a sluggard, a knave or a tippler.—*Rev. Henry W. Beecher.*

A HORSE TRADE.

I SAW a horse trade once. All hands were busily making the "ps" that sounds so odd when a crowd are smoking silently.

"Tom!"

"Hey?"

"Know my bay?"

"Yes."

"How'll you trade?"

We out siders watched to see who should come out ahead, for both were open-eyed chaps.

"The only fault he ever had was high spirits, and he's gitting over that fast," says Bill.

"Mine ain't a bit mettlesome," says Tom

We saw by their eyes that somebody would suffer, and whosoever it was he was flattered forever, for they had never been in direct collision before. After a short silence, says Bill:

"For how many dollars will you swap?"

We peeled our optics and said nothing, for Bill's was by odds the best horse.

"Five," says Tom.

"Done," says Bill.

He had a surething of it. After a short silence:

"Tom!"

"Hey?"

"One thing I forgot. My horse is DEAD."

A very small whistle, and a universal long breath—

"Well, any how, I'll take that V. Mine's DEAD too."

Then burst Bill's mighty heart. He deliquesced.—*Yankee Blade.*

"MR. & MRS. THIEF."

AN extensive dry goods dealer on Washington street has for a long time been in the practice of charging articles missing from his counter, to the firm of "Mr. and Mrs. Thief." Their account had amounted to about \$100—when, a few days since, he detected a young lady belonging to the "upper ten" in the act of secreting a pair of hose, wherupon he politely informed her that he had an unsettled account on his books headed by her name, and if she would wait a few minutes he would add the hose she had just taken to the bill and receipt it for her. The affrighted damsel fell upon her knees and begged, implored him not to expose her. She would leave her gold watch, anything, to prevent discovery, and would immediately obtain the money and settle bill. On these conditions she was allowed to depart. In a short time, however, true to her pledge, she returned—having made a "raise" probably from "Papa" or "Mamma"—and canceled the bill, after which she departed apparently highly gratified at her lucky escape. We understand that quite a number of the dry goods merchants on Washington and Hanover street have devoted a page in their ledgers to the firm of "Mr. & Mrs. Thief";—so that the luckless sinners who first happen to get caught will have to "fork over" for all delinquencies record—if they will save themselves from public disgrace; otherwise, sentence at the discretion of the presiding Judge of the Criminal Courts will be their inevitable doom.—*Boston Chronotype.*

A LARGE ONION.

"Do you call them large turnips?"

"Why, yes, they are considerably large."

"They may be so for turnips, but they are nothing to an onion I saw the other day."

"And how large was the onion?"

"Oh, a monster it weighed forty pounds."

"Forty pounds?"

"Yes, and we took off the layers, and the sixteenth layer went completely round a demijohn that held four gallons!"

"What a whopper!"

"You don't mean to say that I lie?"

"Oh, no; what a whopper of an onion, I mean."

AN ENQUIRING BOY.

"FATHER," said a juvenile apothecary, to his learned "dad"—"what's the reason they don't use pestles in battles?"

"Pestles, my son, what could they do with pestles in battle?"

"Why, Gen. Scott, says, in his letters the mortars did great execution, and I can't see how, without pestles?"

"Pound away, my son, and don't puzzle me with your questions."

Mortars and pestles do a great deal of damage, without being used on the field of battle. The "juvenile" had a bump of "casualty" strongly developed.—*Atlas.*

GENDER AND CASE OF AN EGG.

The following occurred in a school not once hundred miles from London:

Teacher.—What part of speech is the word egg?
Boy.—Noun, sir.

T.—What is its gender?

B.—Can't tell, sir.

T.—Is it masculine, feminine, or neuter?

B.—Can't say, sir till it's hatched.

T.—Well, then, my lad, can you tell me the case?

B.—Oh, yes; the shell, sir.

A DUMB MAN'S WIT.

At a recent examination of the mutes of the Ohio Asylum at Columbus, the following question was proposed to a deaf and dumb teacher in the institution;

"Would it be wrong for a white man to marry a black wife?"

The mute replied by writing—

"I do not know that it would be a sin. WHO WANTS ONE?"

The questioner sloped.

WE were much amused a few days since with a little boy, upon whom his mother was inflicting personal chastisement, saying "Give me two or three licks, more, mother—I don't think I can behave well, yet." Fact!

AN old lady being late at Church, entered as the congregation were rising for prayer. "La!" said she, courtesying, "don't rise on my account."

A BACHELOR in Detroit having advertised for a wife to share his lot, an "anxious enquirer" has solicited information as to the size of said lot.

"SAM, why am de hogs de most intelligent folks in the world?" Because, dey nose ebery ting.

Letters Containing Remittances,

Received at this Office, ending Wednesday last, deducting the amount of postage paid.

J. M. Mabettsville, N. Y. \$0.62; H. L. W. Caledonia, Ill. (for Vol. 25.) \$1.00.

MARRIAGES.

In this city, at Christ's Church on the 21st inst. by the Rev. Mr. Stoughton, Alfred Volkman, Esq. of Buffalo to Miss Mary Barnett, both of Hudson.

In St. John's Church, Hartford, on Tuesday morning, the 11th, inst. by the Rev. A. Cleveland Coxe, Rev. Robert C. Rogers, of this city, to Miss Anna R. Pratt, of the former place.

At Melenville, July 16th, by Rev. Mr. Hinrod, Matthias T. Krue to Mary Ann Palmer, both of Hillsdale.

In Taghkanic, on the 13th inst. by Wm. H. Hawver, Esq. Mr. Christopher Drum, of Gallatin, to Mrs. Margaret L. Houck, of the former place.

On the 12th inst. by the Rev. Josiah Leonard, Mr. Jacob Shaffer, of Clermont, Col. Co. to Miss Susan Ann Gardiner, of Saugerties.

In South Farms, Ct. on the 19th ult. by the Rev. Dr. Fuller, Mr. John W. Cook, of New-York, to Miss Sarah A. Sperry, of the former place.

DEATHS.

In this city, on the 18th inst. Mrs. Mary Adams, widow of the late Doct. Alpheus Adams, aged 62 years.

At Chatham, on the 11th inst. Mrs. Hannah, wife of George Abrahams, in the 64th year of her age.

In Stuyvesant, on the 10th, inst. Mr. Arent Vosburgh aged 81 years.

In New-York on the 7th inst. Catharine Smith, only daughter of Harvey and Mary Macy, aged 2 years, 8 months and 22 days.

Now sweet prattler thou hast left us,
Pain and sickness now are o'er;
To the God who hath berell us,
We resign thee evermore.

Now thy slumbers will be peaceful,
Free from care or earthly moan,
Nothing now for thee is needful,
Christ has sealed thee for his own.

Original Poetry.

For the Rural Repository.

THE LAST YEAR'S BIRD'S NEST.

BY MISS CATHARINE W. BARBER.

WHERE are the speckled eggs which lay
Within this nest, when last this way?—
Both little Adelaide, and I,
Did, peeping in, chance to espy,
One, two and three—they are not here,
They vanished with the flowers last year.

Those eggs my little girl, became
Live things,—the same, the very same
Took throns of song, and upwards flew,
Until they bathed in Heaven's own blue—
They've been ere this in Southern wilds,
And sung perchance in Indian isles.

The nest is here 'mid withered grass,
And now I spy, as round I pass,
'Tis torn in one place—some rude boy,
Hath made of it a useless toy,
And now I fear no bird will sing
Upon this branch thro' all next spring.

Those nestlings' should they now come back,
Would hardly know this mountain track;
The flowers are dead—the flies are gone,
And then this nest—their much loved home
Looks little like the one, last year
Their Mother built so nicely here.

But Time deals change to all below;
E'en birds the lesson sad must know—
'Tis giving you sweet girlhood's grace,
But leaving care-prints on my face,
And many a scheme we build, I fear
Will perish like the nest last year.

Lafayette Female Academy, Ala. 1848.

From the Columbian Magazine.

THE EMIGRANT MOTHER.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

FROM my sweet, native land, I took my way
Across the foaming deep. My husband slept
In his new grave, and poverty had stripped
Our lonely cottage. Letters o'er the wave,
From brother, and from sister, bade me come
To this New World, where there is bread for all.
So, with my heavy, widow'd heart, I came,
My only babe and I.

Conse, curious eyes
Look'd searchingly upon me, as I sat
In the throng'd steerage, with my sick, sick soul.
But at each jeering word, I bow'd my head
Down o'er my helpless child, and was content,
For he was all my world.

Storms rocked the bark;
And haggard fear sprang up, with oaths and cries,
Yet wondrous courage nerv'd me. For to die
With that fair, loving creature in my arms,
Seem'd more than life, without him. If a shade
Of weariness, or trouble, mark'd my brow,
He look'd upon me with his father's eyes,
And I was comforted.

But sickness came,
Close air, and scanty food. Darkly they pressed
On feeble infancy, and oft I heard,
As mournful twilight settled o'er the sea,
The frequent plunge, and the wild mother's shriek,
When her lost darling to the depths went down.
Then came the terror. To my heaving breast
I closer clasped the child, and all my strength
Went forth, in one continued sigh to God.
Scarcely I slept, lest the dire pestilence
Should smite him unawares. Even when he lay

In peaceful dreams, the smile upon his cheek,
I trembled, lest the dark-winged angel breathed
Insidious whispers, luring him away.

It came, at last. That dreadful sickness came,—
The fever—short and mortal. Midnight's pall
Spread o'er the waters, when his last faint breath
Moistened my cheek. Deep in my breaking heart
I shut the mother's cry.

One mighty fear.
Absorbed me—lest his cherished form should feed
The dire sea-monsters—nor beneath the sods
Of the green, quiet, blessed earth, await
The resurrection.

So, I shuddering pressed
The body closer, though its deadly cold
Froze through my soul.
To those around, I said,
"Disturb him not—he sleepeth." Then I sang
And rocked him tenderly, as though he woke
In fretfulness, or felt the sting of pain.
My poor, dead baby! Terrible to me
Such falsehood seemed. But yet the appalling dread
Lest the fierce, sealy monsters of the sea
Should wind around him with their gorging jaws,
Overmastered me.

Nights fled, and mornings dawned,
And still my chill arms clasped immovably
The shrivelling form. They told me he was dead,
And bade me give my beautiful to them,
For burial in the deep. With outstretched hands
They stood demanding him, until the light
Fled from my swimming eyes.

But when I woke
From the long trance, that icy burden laid
No longer on my bosom. Pitying words
The Captain spoke—"Look at yon little boat
Lashed to our stern. There, in his coffin, rests
The body of thy son. If in three days
We reach the land, he shall be buried there
As thou desirest."

There, from breaking morn,
My eyes were fixed, and when the darkness came,
By the red binnacle's uncertain light
I watched that floating speck amid the waves,
And prayed for land.

As thus I kept my watch,
Like desolate Rizpah, mournful visions came
Of my forsaken cottage, while the spring
Of gushing crystal, where 'neath bowering trees
We drew our water, gurgled in my ear
To mock me with its memories of joy.
My throat was dry with anguish, and when voice
Failed me, to pray for land, I lifted up
That silent, naked thought, which finds the Throne
Sooner than pomp of words.

With fiery face,
And eager foot, the third dread morning rose
Out of the misty deep, and coldly rang
The death-knell of my hope.

As o'er the stern
I gazed with dim eye on the flashing brine,
Methought its depths were opened, and I saw
Creatures most vile, that o'er the bottom crept,—
Lizards and slimy serpents, hideous forms
And shapes, for which man's language hath no name;
While to the surface rose the monster shark,
Intent to seize his prey.

Convulsive shrieks,
Long pent within my bleeding heart, burst forth.
But from the watcher at the mast there came
And shout of—land! and on the horizon's edge
Gleamed a faint streak, like the white seraph's wing.
Oh! blessed land! We neared it, and my breath
Was one continued gasp,—Oh! blessed land!

A boat was launch'd. With flashing oar it reached
A lonely isle. Bent o'er the vessel's side,
I saw them dig a narrow grave, and lay
In the cool bosom of the quiet earth
The little body that was mine no more.
Nor wept I—for an angel said to me,
"God's will!—God's will!—and thy requited prayer
Remember!"

To my hand a scroll they brought,
Bearing the name of that deserted strand,

And record of the day in which they laid
My treasure there. They might have spared that toil:
A mother's forgetful love needs not
Record, or date.

The ship held on her course.
To greener shores. There came an exile's pain,
Beneath a foreign sky.

Yet 'twere a sin
To mourn with bitterness the boy whose smile
Cheers me no more, since the sea had him not,
Nor the sea monsters.

Endless praise to Him,
Who did not scorn the poor weak woman's sigh.
Of desolate woe.

No monument is thine,
Oh babe! that 'neath yon sterile sands dost sleep,
Save the strong sculpture in a mother's heart;
And by its traces will she know thee well
When the graves open, and before God's throne
Both small and great are gathered.

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